

SOME NEW BOOKS.

Precedents and Personalities in the House of Representatives.

Since the proceedings of legislatures are governed by precedents and personalities, these are the materials of the new book, *Precedents and Personalities in the House of Representatives*, by the late Mr. James H. McLaughlin. The author served in Congress from 1897 to 1911. He began his studies in the history of the procedure in the House—a phrasing that expresses perhaps more accurately than the book's title the plan upon which the book is written. The assistance of Speaker Reed, Speaker Galusha and Senator Frye made generous donations to Mr. McLaughlin's researches of anecdotal reminiscence, and with Mr. Hinds' "Precedents" propping the parliamentary technique of the House, the author has produced a volume which is not only a valuable addition to the literature of the House, but also a most interesting and instructive study of the House as a body of men and personalities. The history of the House is not only a study of the House as a body of men and personalities, but also a study of the House as a body of men and personalities. The history of the House is not only a study of the House as a body of men and personalities, but also a study of the House as a body of men and personalities.

The men who made our Constitution, however much they may have been indebted to Great Britain for a model, did not copy British methods of the popular branch of the national administration. The House of Representatives was a warning, not an example, to the creators of the House of Representatives. But many years passed before the system of apportionment was fixed with any approach to satisfaction of conflicting sectional interests. And even yet, in the present session of the House, new session, could a close election leave its composition almost evenly balanced in party representation. It is not pleasant to contemplate what might occur if a bold bodivler clerk should copy Hugh A. Garland, who in 1895 prepared a roll of members in the House, and put the names of all constituents from New Jersey he endeavored to give his own party the number of votes needed to elect a Speaker and thus organize the House to its own advantage. In the first session of the Fortieth Congress, Edward McPherson, a member of the House, was making up his roll, declined, the Speaker having not yet been elected, to entertain any proposal to modify it. James Brooks of New York called attention to the clerk's omission to call the names of members-elect from Louisiana and Georgia, whereupon the Speaker, in a fit of order and refused to hear an appeal. The incident has not a parallel in the history of the House.

It is only three years since the removal of the desks and the substitution of benches, with members free on coming in from the galleries, the crowded place, did away with the big problem of seating. The allotment of places was for many years the cause of heartburnings. The old chamber, now Statuary Hall, afforded fairly good accommodations until another appropriation was made for the new chamber, the membership reached 240. Then there was complaint that members living at a distance were at a disadvantage in getting seats as compared with those within easy reach of the capital. An out and out lottery for the seats was suggested. Howell Cobb of Georgia evolved the plan of having a blindfolded page draw numbered marbles from a box. When the marble bearing a member's number was drawn, the member immediately proceeded to seek out his seat. Mr. McKim, the one most to his liking. Those unlucky members whose numbers were last to emerge had perforce to accept placement in the far, dark corner that had been nicknamed the "Cherokee strip."

Speakers of the House have not always been men of the calibre of Mr. John Clay, Bell, Winthrop, Cobb, Banks, Cuffey, Hayes, Kerr, Randall, Carlisle, Reed and Cannon. "The three Johns," White, Jones and Davis, represent the control of party bosses. Stevenson and Polk, gained for high place through the influence of President Jackson. Hunter and Pennington, neither of whom possessed outstanding fitness or ability, both owed their selection to expedience, compromise selections. Galusha A. Grow became a hero when he knocked down Mr. Lawrence Kett of South Carolina on the floor of the House in 1858 and was elected Speaker on first ballot. Kett called Grow "a black Republican puppy." Grow exclaimed, "No negro driver shall back his whip over me!" and Samuel H. Johnson, who followed as Thomas B. Reed had narrated the incident, "Barkdale of Mississippi rushed at Mr. Covode, who upfired a spittoon; but Barkdale's leg came off, and Covode had not the heart to fight an unprotected skill." Peace came only with the march of the mice.

Mr. Alexander compares the various Speakers' use of their powers in deciding questions of order and recognizing members in later years. It is a most embarrassing, and the former is the most difficult, of the Speaker's duties. As we follow the development of a body of precedent, unwritten rules regulating recognition, and the Speakers' use of their voting privilege and their power of committee appointment, it is easy to see how "Gag" came to be possible. On the other hand, Speakers have shown much delicacy in difficult situations, as when Howell Cobb, charged with mutilating the House Journal, called his most distinguished opponent, Robert C. Winthrop, to the chair, and when Randall, in 1875, during an investigation which concerned his personal honesty, turned the gavel over to his great rival, John G. Carlisle. John Quincy Adams complains in his diary of being called to the chair by the Speaker, the House being in committee of the whole, to keep him out of low company. "Gag" played this trick frequently on Samuel S. Cox; but, in the chair as out of it, Cox refused to wear a muzzle.

Speaker Clay evaded the rule against the Chair's participation in debate by cleverly insinuating his opinions, "with a captivating smile and a graceful bow" which disarmed criticism. Crip

and Cannon and Clark, of the more recent Speakers, each at least once addressed the House without its permission. A "trick episode, growing out of a debate on the tariff, the coming of a quorum, caused a scene of disorder which emphasized the wisdom of the tradition against the Speaker entering debate.

It is the custom of the House, at the end of its session, to offer a resolution of commendation to the Speaker. The compliment is sometimes, naturally enough, tainted with a certain insincerity, but as a rule courtesy prevails and the wounds of the parliamentary battle are forgotten. In 1891, however, the House came very close to humiliating Speaker Sedwick. An "impeachable" Federalist and a most astute presiding officer, Mr. Sedwick failed not only to win the favor of the opposition on the vote of thanks but to gain the suffrage of all members of his own party. Speaker Sedwick, however, was not to be so easily defeated. He called for the record of the House, and the review of the organic growth of the lower house of our national legislature and of the organic growth of the lower house of our national legislature and of the organic growth of the lower house of our national legislature.

When the clerk of the House, at the second session, in its first session, reached the clause expressing appreciation of the Speaker's fair and impartial conduct, the word "impartial" was the signal that set the House rocking with laughter. "Stevens acted as a sort of patronage secretary to President Jackson, and when he announced his committee assignments often deepened into contentment." "It finally denied him the privilege of the committee of the House, and charged with the investigation of a sensational defalcation in the New York Custom House." To thank him for his "impartial" services became something more than a mere formal act of courtesy. When the resolution came up, the Speaker of the House, in an oratorical manner, his contemporaries used to compare with Patrick Henry, made a speech in which he called the Speaker "the tool of the Executive" and "the despair of his party." He named over various officials in view of which, he said, the House of Representatives was "less than a lot of dogs." The confusion of the Administration leaders was worse confounded when, on some one moving the previous question, the irrepressible Prentiss remarked that the demand was "as humiliating as to make it a condition of respectability to be a member of the House."

On the roll call, fewer members voted thanks than had voted for Polk for Speaker. Thomas B. Reed declined to make unanimous the vote to Speaker "Crip at the close of the Fifty-third Congress, and his refusal to share in the act of commendation was a serious impairment of the custom. After the Polk episode Congressional malcontents made such good use of the precedent against the word "impartial" that of the next eleven Speakers seven failed to gain the honor. Among the names of the Speakers of the House, Howell Cobb got the vote unqualified, in 1847, but after that it remained for Speaker Coffey, with his "unfailing politeness and extraordinary courtesy," to "mellow the House into perennial good nature."

Mr. Alexander's chapter on the Speaker's brilliant as it is, is not exceptional, but representative among his chapters. Those on committees, on rules of the House, on quorum, on debate and debaters and on contested elections are written with the understanding and the impartial judgment of one who has been through the mill, and now it looks back with calm detachment upon the scene of his former labors. The book is full of Congressional lore, a delightful and valuable record of men and measures. Students of the popular branch of our Government will find Mr. Alexander a most competent and pleasant guide.

America's Near Future.

There is nothing academic about the discussion of the complications forced upon the United States by the world war. *Our American Future* (The Reilly & Britton Company, Chicago), Mr. O'Laughlin, who was Assistant Secretary of State under President Roosevelt, is partisan in his comparison of Republican diplomacy with that of President Wilson and Secretary Bryan, but his bias does not lack the prop of specific citation of cases, it is the effect, not the cause, of his logic. There is not the slightest ambiguity in his statement of the present problems of America, with which we are confronted by the contest of European and Asiatic Powers that clash with our own, of the place which we hold in European regard, and of the programme, in spirit if not in detail, which the logic of events prescribes for our future guidance in the troubled waters of international relations. The book is a volume of plain spoken; it is based upon an intimate view of American diplomacy of the recent past, and it drives home America's need of a reasoned and permanent policy in international relations.

After the war, Mr. O'Laughlin posits the European nations will be equipped with fine fleets and veteran armies. He dismisses without debate the opposing argument that the tasks of economic rehabilitation and physical recuperation may for decades absorb the attention of these Powers in solution of their domestic problems. He asks whether we may not expect Europe to look to the United States to pay the heavy debts which the war will have created. If he does not answer the question explicitly, there is no room for doubt as to the answer, which is in the judgment of ten years ago. The book is a volume of plain spoken; it is based upon an intimate view of American diplomacy of the recent past, and it drives home America's need of a reasoned and permanent policy in international relations.

It is partisan or is it patriotic to say that in this situation the President must lead, and not wait for the guidance of vox populi? The Administration need neither coax nor force European unity. That neutrality is indispensable to our safety even pacifists recognize. The author maintains, and those who cannot imagine his view must admit an unpleasant possibility of correctness in it, that Europe at the worst holds us in contempt, and at the best is "in the line" of the possibility of our realizing in time for effective defence those possibilities of firm and united action which are latent in the composition which the "melting pot" has been acting upon in a manner that no one

can conclusively analyze. In the present hour, the author's conclusion seems to be, our part has been "middle-sized" by the manner of its execution, but the manner unsatisfactory.

Before the war, he says, England's attitude toward this country had been conciliatory, while Germany had been quietly and with alarming efficiency, that organizing for her own purposes, the inference quite plain that whatever the considerations that in each case have kept European Powers from clashing with us, or as he puts it, "From going too far with us," they reduce finally to a caution inspired by inability to determine the exact measure of American potentialities. His account of Mr. Roosevelt's dealing with Germany over Venezuela, in 1901, is most interesting. After some pretty nervous diplomatic jockeying, Baron von Holleben called attention to the fact that the Emperor had refused to let the United States to the island of Rodin, the critic happily says: "Other sculptors turn life into sculpture; he turns sculpture into life. His clay is part of the substance of earth and the earth still clings about it as it comes up and lives. It is at once the flower and root; that of the others is the flower only, and the root is the flower."

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